

1. Introduction

Program administrators of the Department of Housing and Urban Development's (HUD) rental assistance programs are expected to verify all tenant-reported income at the time of re-certification to correctly determine the level of rental assistance the household is entitled to receive. This tenant-reported income includes Social Security (SS) and Supplemental Security Income (SSI) benefits provided by the Social Security Administration (SSA). HUD developed and implemented an automated system called the Tenant Assessment Subsystem (TASS), deployed on HUD's Secure System, to provide program administrators with the required SS/SSI information via a secure Internet facility. HUD's Office of Public and Indian Housing's (PIH) Real Estate Assessment Center (REAC) maintains and operates TASS.

A. Purpose

This User Guide provides information and instructions for obtaining the SS and SSI benefit information of individuals who are being re-certified for continued participation in a rental assistance program, not those who are applying for rental assistance. It does not change the requirement that applicants and participants in HUD's rental assistance programs disclose all income when applying for initial or continued rental assistance.

B. Applicability

This Guide applies to the following HUD programs¹:

- Public Housing and Housing Choice Programs (Section 8 tenant-based programs)
 - Section 8 Project-Based;
 - Rent Supplement;
 - Rental Assistance Program (RAP);
 - Section 236;
 - Below Market Interest Rate (BMIR);
 - 202 and 811 Project Rental Assistance Contract (PRAC); and,
 - 202/162 Project Assistance Contract (PAC).

¹ The Quality Housing and Work Responsibility Act of 1998 (QHWRA) published in the Federal Register on February 19, 1998, affects the frequency of required income verifications for the public housing program. The existing automated system for SS and SSI verification does not recognize the less frequent verifications required by QHWRA. Therefore, public housing agencies will receive SS and SSI data for some periods when re-certifications may not be required. The computer matching/income verification process will be revised when data is available to facilitate SS and SSI matching based on the QHWRA requirements.



C. Advantages of the TASS Online SS/SSI Benefit Information

HUD strongly encourages its program administrators to use the SS and SSI benefit information provided via the TASS online system because it offers many advantages including the following:

- Quick and easy verification of SS and SSI benefits; users may obtain the reports as soon as HUD places the information on the Internet facility
- The ability to search for and locate information on a specific household or groups of households
- The ability to download SS/SSI benefit data in a format suitable for importing into a database for users who wish to manage their own database
- Information on individuals who may have unreported or underreported SS or SSI benefits
- Help in identifying excessive rental assistance paid to tenants who underreported their benefits
- Information needed to help determine whether administrative or legal action should be taken against tenants who underreported their income

Further, by accessing the HUD website where the TASS online system is located, the program administrators may obtain other information of interest concerning HUD's programs.

D. Definitions

Appendix I contain a comprehensive list of definitions for terms used in this document. The terms "program administrator" and "POA" are used in this Guide to indicate public housing agencies (PHAs), private owners, management agents (O/As), and state housing authorities acting as contract administrators.

E. Superseded Document

This Guide supersedes the March 2000 version of the Guide for Social Security and Supplemental Security Income Verification.

F. Internet (Web) Sites

HUD publishes current information on the HUD Web site regarding SS and SSI verification. Any updates to this Guide will be available on REAC's Tenant Income Verification (TASS) Web page: <http://www.hud.gov/reac>. Use the following steps to access the online version of the User Guide:

- Click on the **Business Area Products** link on the menu on the left side of the REAC Web page.
- Scroll down the **REAC Products** web page.



- Click on the **Tenant Assessment (Tenant Income Verification)** link.
- Click on **Documents and Guidance** in the yellow box on the right of the Tenant Assessment (Tenant Income Verification) web page.
- Scroll down the **Documents and Guidance** web page.
- Click on the **Social Security and Supplemental Security Income Verification Guide (9/2003)** link.